

BULLETIN
OF THE
BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Volume 87

Number 9

Published : 4th December 1967

The six hundred and forty-sixth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, London, on the 27th November, 1967.

Chairman: The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hurcomb.

Members present: 19; Guests 6.

Mr. Robert Gillmore gave a well illustrated talk on the subject of bird art and illustration.

The African Finfoot in Ethiopia

by C. W. BENSON and E. SCHÜZ

Received 13th June, 1967

The African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* (Vieillot) is widespread in tropical Africa to as far west as Senegal, and extends outside the tropics into Natal and the eastern Cape Province (White, 1965: 107). But records by one of us (Schüz, 1967) from the upper reaches of the Blue Nile seem to be the first for Ethiopia. The purpose of the present note is to amplify these records.

While staying at Bahar Dar, on the south side of Lake Tana, from 5th to 18th April 1966, it was possible, thanks to Dr. F. Schäuffele who provided a motor boat, to explore the outlet of the Blue Nile from the south-east corner of the lake near the Debra Mariam lagoon to as far as the first small cataract, a distance of about two kilometres. In this area the river is much interrupted by islets. Large patches of papyrus and dense wooded vegetation alternate with rocks, the latter frequented by such species as *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *P. africanus*, *Anhinga rufa* and *Burhinus senegalensis*. The party, consisting of one of the authors and his wife (Mrs. Schüz), and Dr. Schäuffele, obtained clear views of African Finfoots swimming in open water between the rocks. On 8th April a female was seen, and on 17th April two males separately. One of the males was carrying a long leaf in its bill which it was thought might be for nest building. However, in the Transvaal Hosken (1966) has recorded the swallowing of leaves. The habitat in which finfoots were seen on the upper reaches of the Blue Nile was similar to that in which Schüz had previously observed them on the Zambezi near Livingstone, and in the Kafue National Park, Zambia, in July 1957. In particular, in all three localities there was the apparently essential requirement of a perennial river with a fringing dense woody cover.

Chapin (1954) has discussed subspeciation in the African Finfoot. When specimens become available from the highlands of Ethiopia (unfortunately efforts by Dr. Schäuffele to obtain one were unsuccessful, owing to the difficult conditions), it may well prove that there is a distinct form in that region. The considerable degree of endemism in Ethiopian non-forest birds has been discussed by Moreau (1966: 220–221). Chapin (1954) gives no locality for the African Finfoot nearer to Ethiopia than the north-eastern Congo, Entebbe and the highlands of Kenya east of the Rift Valley. Cave and Macdonald (1955) give no record from the Sudan, though Pitman (1962) considers that it is probably widely distributed throughout Uganda. The Ethiopian population is probably quite isolated, due to lack in immediately adjacent territory of suitable perennial rivers or streams with a fringing dense woody cover. But presumably it is not confined to the upper reaches of the Blue Nile where the three birds which are the subject of this note were observed, but occurs elsewhere on that river. The right ecological conditions may also exist on other rivers in the Ethiopian highlands. The African Finfoot is easily overlooked, though ‘‘far from being as uncommon as is usually represented’’ (Percy, 1963: 127).

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Taxonomic notes on African Turdinae

by C. M. N. WHITE

Received 26th April, 1967

These notes embody the results of studies of African Turdinae at the Cape Town Museum and National Museum, Bulawayo and amend my *Check List* of 1962. A few additional notes have been added to complete the addenda to the latter.

Cercomela familiaris (Stephens).

C. f. actuosa Clancey, 1966, Durban Mus. Nov. 7, p. 445. Matatiele, Drakensberg represents an intergrade from the nominate to *C. f. hellmayri* (Rchw.) and I would include it with the nominate form.

Cercomela tractrac (Wilkes)

C. t. nubilosa Clancey was listed in the addendum to my 1963 instalment of the *Check List*. Material now examined shows that it differs from *barlowi* in its redder rump and greyer, less white underside.

Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris (Lafresnaye)

The range ascribed to the nominate form should be reduced by the recognition of the two following forms.